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THE INTERCHANGE

JUNE, 1984

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS' EMPLOYEES' NEWSLETTER

GUEST COLUMN

The Engineering Division of the Department of Highways designs and oversees the construction of roads and bridges. Currently one of the major highways in Montana is nearing completion. A review of that highway, Interstate 15, is a good example of the Department's engineering efforts stretching back over a quarter of a century.

Interstate 15 enters Montana from Idaho at Monida Pass in southwestern Montana, extends north for 395.2 miles passing through Butte, Helena and Great Falls, and ends at the Canadian Border near Sweetgrass in northern Montana.



HARRIOTT

The majority of I-15 is completed 4-lane highway with some exceptions on the southern part of the route. The major uncompleted sections are located between Butte and Helena where 14.3 miles of 4-lane and 3.8 miles of add 2-lane remain to be completed. South of Butte, 1.8 miles of 4-lane and 9.9 miles of add 2-lane remain to be built. North of Boulder, one may travel 4-lane interstate all the way to the Canadian Border.

The first I-15 construction project was Cascade-Ulm, which was let to contract in December, 1957. The last contract, which will be Pipe Organ-North (South Section), is scheduled for contract in 1986. So with a probable completion date for Pipe Organ-North of 1988, the building of I-15 will have spanned a time period of 29 years.

The Shelby-Oilmont project completed the major segment of I-15 between Great Falls and the Canadian line. It was opened to traffic in 1980. Between Helena and Great Falls, the last project was the additional 2 lanes of Cascade-North & South, which was also completed in 1980. From Butte to Helena, the last project to be let will be Butte-North add 2 lanes which is scheduled for April, 1985. Although Butte-North will be the last project let in this segment, it probably will not be the last project completed. That distinction will go to Elk Park-North and Bernice-South. The major segment of I-15 between Idaho

and Butte and the entire I-15 route (and Montana's entire Interstate System) will be finished with the completion of Pipe Organ-North (South Section) in 1988.

The completion of I-15 has taken major steps forward in 1984 with the opening of Dillon-South, the letting in April of Bernice-Basin and the scheduled letting of Elk Park-North and Bernice-South in June.

Work on the 3.6 mile Dillon-South (North Section) has been underway since April, 1982 and will be completed in July of this year. Traffic was placed on the new highway in April, allowing traffic for the first time to bypass the town of Dillon.

The 6.9 mile Bernice-Basin project was let to contract in April of this year with the low bids totalling \$14,234,811.40. A separate structure and channel change package was let to contract in September, 1983 at a cost of \$917,815.90, so the total cost of the Bernice-Basin project amounted to \$15,152,627.30. Completion is expected in 1986.

Elk Park-North and Bernice-South are tied for contract and scheduled to be let in June of this year. This 7.1 mile section of I-15 is expected to cost in the 20 million dollar range and take 2½ years to build. I-15 will be completely closed for a maximum of 60 days in 1985 in order to facilitate construction of these projects. This section is expected to be one of the more difficult and costly stretches of interstate construction in Montana. It should be complete in late 1986 or early 1987.

The design and construction of I-15 has provided a multitude of challenges to Department of Highways' personnel. With the work on I-15 drawing to a close, it is apparent that the engineering challenges have been met and it is time to move on to other goals.

Don Harriott
Administrator
Engineering Division

NEW HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER

Maria N. Murray of Butte is the new Highway Commissioner in the Butte district. She replaces John Sullivan of Livingston, who resigned.



MURRAY

Mrs. Murray, who teaches reading and art at Butte Central Junior High, has the distinction of being the first woman to serve on the Highway Commission.

In addition to her new duties as Commissioner, Mrs. Murray is also involved in other community development activities: she's president of the Butte Junior League; a participant in the Junior Achievement program; a member of the board of the Arts Chateau; and works with a drug and alcohol intervention program connected with the schools.

NEW EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



GOSNELL

Bill Gosnell is the new executive staff assistant for the Department, replacing Sam Hubbard, who moved to a position with the Department of Commerce. Bill will serve as the Department's legislative liaison, and budget and systems coordinator.

Bill comes to the Department with a strong background in finance and administration. His most recent position was senior budget analyst in the governor's budget office. He has been the administrator of the State Energy Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; the administrator of the State Personnel Division of the Department of Administration; and the senior fiscal analyst for the Montana Legislature.



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION WEEK runners. 10 Km runners standing, 5Km runners kneeling. Front row—L to R: Corey Hill, Mary Hill-Accounting; Marcia Ala-Accounting; Kathy Willis-Accounting; Second row: Monte Brown-Accounting; Denis Burke-Accounting; Marty Beatty-Project Management Unit; Back row: Ed Eschler; Bill Dunbar-FHWA; Norm Rognlie-Bridge Bureau; Hank Whitaker-Accounting; John Sullivan-Accounting; Doug Morgan-Traffic Unit; Bill Salisbury-Accounting; and Tim Cail-Data Processing. Not pictured, Jo Eschler-Director's office.

PERSONNEL PROFILE



LINDGREN

"Swede" Lindgren has flown the skies of Montana for 27 years. Swede, who is the manager of the Aircraft Unit, started with the Department back in 1957. Prior to that he flew for the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for two years.

Hired first to pilot Highway personnel around the state, Swede soon became involved in the first aerial photography done by the Department of Highways. He learned through on-the-job experience how to fly the precise flight paths needed as a photographer captures images for mapping or other uses.

When Swede first started, the Department owned a Cessna 182. As aerial photography became more important, the Cessna was used exclusively for that work, and a Piper was acquired for passenger flights. In 1970 the Department acquired a Commander whose features allow it to handle both photo and passenger duties.

Swede spends about 90% of his time flying in-state, and has landed in most of Montana's sixty-odd airports. In addition to flying Highway personnel, he often exchanges flying duties with the Governor's pilot, who shares a hangar and office with Swede. He has flown governors Aronson, Nutter, Babcock, Anderson, Judge, and now Schwinden.

Although he claims he hasn't run into any unusual situations, another pilot reminded Swede of the time he was snowed in at the Cut Bank airport with the then Governor of California, Ronald Reagan. Swede recalled chatting with Reagan, and found him to be a "very personable and quiet man."

Swede always wanted to be in aviation, and today he feels he is lucky to have stayed in his chosen field for at least the first 27 years of his career.

TRANSPORTATION RUNNERS

Tim Cail, Hank Whitaker, Doug Morgan, and John Sullivan of the Department of Highways, and Bill Dunbar of the Federal Highway Administration were the top five transportation runners in the annual National Transportation Week 10 Km Race held May 16, in Helena.

The five clocked an average team time of 41:47 for the 10 kilometers (6.21 miles). Tim Cail's winning time was 35.49.

The race is an annual event in which Montana's transportation employees compete against the times of transportation departments from other states. Times are recorded for two separate competitions: top five for open team, and a top three women's team. Montana had no women's team this year in the 10Km race.

Last year Illinois won the competition and Montana placed 15th in the open division.

This year for the first time a concurrent 5Km race was held. The winner was Mary Hill's son Corey, with a time of 18:21.

Cyle Wold, a Communications Unit employee in Kalispell, is expected to turn in a fast time for team entry on a 10Km course in the Kalispell area.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

All state highway employees and their immediate families are eligible to compete in the upcoming 14th Annual Western State Highway Golf Tournament. It will be held August 4th and 5th at the Meadow Lakes country club in Columbia Falls.

LETTING PLANS

Project Location	Month	Interstate Projects	Miles
Elk Park-North	June	Grading, Plant Mix Surfacing and Structures	3.8
Bernice-South	June	Grading and Plant Mix Surfacing	4.0
Brady-North and South	June	Rehabilitation and Plant Mix Overlay	11.6
St. Regis-East and West	June	Rehabilitation of Clark Fork and St. Regis River Structures	—
Ballantine Interchange	July	Structure Repair	—
		Primary Projects	
Clearwater Junction	June	Weigh Station	—
Boyd-South	June	Widen and Plant Mix Overlay	8.9
Crow Agency-Busby	June	Grading and Plant Mix Surfacing	8.7
North of Augusta and North of Choteau	July	Signs and Slope Flattening	—
B.N. Overpass-Lyndale Avenue-Helena	June	Structure Rehabilitation	—
		Secondary Projects	
Winifred-PN Road	June	Gravel Surfacing	17.0
Loring-Canadian Line	July	Plant Mix Surfacing	11.0
		Urban Projects	
B.N.R.R. Structure-Havre	June	Structure Widening and Rehabilitation	—
Cruse Avenue-Helena	July	Grading and Plant Mix Surfacing	0.3
Montana Avenue-Helena	July	Widening and Drainage	0.3
		Other	
Bull Hook Flood Canal-Havre	June	Structure and Approaches	—

BUTTE DISTRICT

by Karen Ham

We have so many new faces in the Butte District, our maintenance payroll looks like the format for musical chairs.

In the Helena section, Jim Tresch has taken over the responsibilities vacated by retiring Sectionman, Ed Morello. Jim has been with Highway Maintenance since 1969.

John Blacker replaces Tom Lunceford at the helm of McDonald Pass. John has been with us 13 years, and is an active sportsman.

In Wisdom, our new Sectionman is Richard Weaver. He took over when Dale Conover retired in December. He has a total of 7½ years with the Department and says he loves plowing and patching.

Bing Miller retired as the Helena Maintenance Foreman in November. This action resulted in the promotion of Art Tintinger. Art had been the Sectionman in Townsend, starting with the Department in 1960.

When Art Tintinger moved into Bing's spot, Gerald Olsen picked up the reins in Townsend. Gerry started with the Highway in 1962.

Tony Lanch is our new Shop Superintendent in Butte. He replaces retiring Emmett Fogarty. Tony is a Butte native and has been with the Highway shop 18 years.

Our congratulations to all those with new positions and a sincere thank you for a job well done to all our retirees.

Butte was saddened by the recent passing of our good friend, Gene Goodland. Gene died May 16, 1984, at the age of 68. He first went to work for the Highway Department in 1949 as a maintenance worker. After one year off to serve in the Army Air Force, he was rehired as a truck driver, and in June 1958, he was made Maintenance Foreman. Since his retirement in December 1978, Gene had been active in the Butte State Employees FCU. We shall miss Gene, and extend our condolences to his wife, Helen.

GREAT FALLS DISTRICT

by Lowell Smith

Milt Ingersoll, maintenance superintendent, retired on May 31, after 35 years of service. Milt was employed in April of 1949 at the old Dearborn section between Wolf Creek and Augusta. In March of 1953 he was promoted to section supervisor at Neihart and later transferred to Rogers Pass. From 1970 until present, Milt has held the maintenance superintendent position in Great Falls.

Michael Johnson has been selected to fill the new personnel specialist position in Great Falls. Mike comes to us from Billings where he was personnel manager at a meat packing plant that employed over 200 people. Mike has a B.S. degree from the University of Montana. Welcome aboard, Mike.

BILLINGS DISTRICT

by Kelly Nelson

On the evening of Tuesday, April 24, the small ski resort community of Red Lodge was hit with the worst snow storm recorded since weather observers began keeping records in 1902. According to the National Weather Service, a total of 73 inches of snow fell during the three-day period. A steady 30 to 35 mph wind caused drifts from 15 to 20 feet high.

State maintenance crews were called out about 4 a.m. Wednesday. By Thursday morning, snow removal efforts were abandoned on Highway 78 from Red Lodge to Columbus so they could concentrate on U.S. 212 from Red Lodge to Rockvale. Despite efforts of the crews, at 1:23 p.m. Thursday, Red Lodge was isolated from the rest of the world by the forced-closure of U.S. 212.

During the blizzard, two of the Department's front-end loaders were snowed in at the Bear-tooth Pass Switchbacks, where crews had been previously working to clear the pass for summer tourist travel. A rotary plow designed to be mounted on the largest of these two loaders sat unusable in the Red Lodge Shop.

After attempts to bring them off the mountain failed, the Department hired Leon Pattyn, a former Department employee, with his two extra-long-track snowmobiles to drive to them. With Dave Holmberg, Division Maintenance Superintendent from Billings driving one, and Leon with Randy Baum, the Red Lodge Sectionman on the other, they were able to reach the first loader, discovering it had a dead battery. The second loader was brought down, and after receiving a new battery, the first loader was eventually brought down, also.

When the weather finally broke on Friday, the crews had quite a clean-up job. Saturday, crews and equipment from Red Lodge, Billings and Lewistown began to clear the highways and also help the community dig out by loading and hauling away mounds of snow. Tuesday, after many hours of overtime, the job was completed and all went home exhausted.

Our many thanks go out to these individuals for a job well done!

SPRING STORM COSTS

The Maintenance Management System has the capability of assigning "Cost Centers" to certain activities for the purpose of determining costs. All Divisions were asked to assign a cost center number for the recent spring storm.

For the period 4-23-84 through 4-27-84, \$138,884.91 had been spent fighting this storm. This interim report doesn't include the major clean-up efforts that began Saturday the 28th. It is estimated that when all expenses are in, this storm cost Maintenance in excess of a quarter of a million dollars.

MISSOULA DISTRICT

by Kathy Baker

Donald Damschen, Sectionman at Plains, retired on May 31, 1984 after 22 years of service to the Department of Highways. Don was originally hired as a Maintenance Man 3 and has functioned as Sectionman since being promoted to that position in 1978. Don plans to work part-time in the private sector and hopes to be able to enjoy some hard earned vacation. Cudos to you Don from the crews, management and public for helping to make Montana's roads a safer place.

Dennis Foy, Designer II and Vern Jones, District Utility Agent, returned May 20th from a weekend of golf at the Highway Tournament in Helena. There were 40 participants and the tournament involved playing 18 holes on Saturday and Sunday. Dennis Foy took 2nd place in the first flight and Vern Jones came away with first place in the fourth flight. Both won gift certificates that were redeemable at the Helena pro shop. It's the first time they've got anything from Helena without a purchase order!

The Highway Department Bowling Tournament was attended by 40 people from the Missoula District. Two mens' and two womens' teams entered the tournament. No one came back with a trophy but everyone made it back home and that seems triumph enough after the exhausting festivities that weekend.

Missoula's Personnel Specialist I, Carl Dehne, joined the Missoula staff on May 14th. Carl has been self employed in Roseburg, Oregon for the last 7 years. He also worked previously as a high school instructor of English in eastern Montana for 6 years.

HIGHWAY BOWLING TOURNAMENT

At 10:00 a.m. May 5th, 1984, in Helena was the beginning of the 23rd Annual Highway Bowling Tourney. People from around the state participated in this annual event. There were 60 team entries, 129 doubles entries and 258 single entries. Top men's team was "Norwest Bank" from Kalispell and top women's team was "Close Enough" from Helena. Cliff Farrington and Jerry Branum were top seated in men's doubles with Linda Miotke and Kathy Miller from Whitehall taking top seats in women's doubles event. In the men's singles Bruce Opie from Billings ranked first and Joan Morello from East Helena placed first in women's singles. All-events for men was taken by Charles Brown from Lewistown and in women's all-events was Sharon Fiske from Helena.

The Eagles Manor of Helena hosted the Annual Banquet, serving New York Steak with all the trimmings and supplying a band for everyone's dancing pleasure.

Just a reminder that Butte will be hosting the Bowling Tournament in 1985.

WASHTO MEETING

The Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (WASHTO) Chief Administrative Officers' Spring Workshop was held in Missoula in May. Representatives from all 16 states and the U.S. Forest Service attended, including Director Gary Wicks; Deputy Director John Prebil; Executive Staff Assistant Bill Gosnell; and District Engineer Vern Borden.

The first topic on the agenda was Creative Financing and Multi-Year Plans, led by the State of Montana. Montana undertook an accelerated program, following approval by its legislature, aimed at getting all Federal-Aid interstate work to contract by 1987 and at contracting some other improvements. The work will be performed under two separate programs—A BOND program with normal long terms for repaying the bonds; and a BAN program (Bond Anticipation Notes) with "shorter term paper" that, if necessary, can be refinanced with bonds at the end of 30 months or so.

Highway Investments for Economic Development was a discussion of what the various states are doing with regard to cooperative funding of projects which benefit an entrepreneur or a group of developers. The discussion revealed that most states have some form of cooperative funding wherein the developer puts in somewhere between one-half to 100 percent of the cost of the improvement—dependent somewhat on that improvement's impact on the motoring public at large. Some states have prioritization computer programs for improvements to their systems and the use of some cooperative funding can increase the priority ranking of specific jobs.

A discussion of the Federal Highway Program and where it should be going was led by Arizona. Bill Ordway, President of AASHTO, gave the status of the existing legislation in Congress. It was agreed, after some discussion, that President Miller would advise the appropriate committees of the unanimous support of WASHTO for: (1) Opposing any change in the 4R formula; (2) Support for weight/distance feasibility study; and (3) Opposing subsidy of gasohol from the Highway Fund. There was one abstention with regard to the gasohol position by the State of South Dakota. The states were then urged to take any action they believe appropriate, such as advising their congressional delegations of the stand WASHTO is taking.

Texas and Washington gave reports on their efforts toward Computer-Assisted Drafting and Design. To date, most of the efforts have been toward drafting, with the design work to follow as computers increase their capabilities.

Wyoming gave a summary of the Task Force on Pavement Rutting and Stripping recommendations. This Task Force held several meetings this winter and spring following the AASHTO meeting in Denver. Most of the states are continuing to have some problems and no one has all the answers as yet to proper pavement performance. This is a topic in which there certainly will be added discussions and undertakings in the future. One recommendation from the Task Force was that a Subcommittee on Materials and Research be formed in WASHTO under the Standing Committee on Engineering and Operations. After some discussion, it was agreed that no action would be taken at this meeting of the Chief Administrative Officers but that it would be an appropriate topic for consideration at the regular annual meeting of WASHTO in Rapid City.

LETTERS

Mr. Wicks:

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Such could be the battle cry of the highway brigades which worked long, hard, and at times, in extremely hazardous conditions during and after the record breaking snow storm in the Red Lodge area. The local crew battled the winds, drifts, and six foot snow fall valiantly for several days to reopen a life line from Red Lodge to the rest of the world.

Joined by crews from the Lewistown and Billings districts, the crew continued to clear away the enormous drifts from US 212 and the other state roads in the area. The residents of Red Lodge owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the crews, their supervisors, and the State Department of Highways for placing such a high priority on getting our community moving again. The effort that went into the cleanup and the resources used were tremendous, yet the work was accomplished much sooner and more effectively than anyone could have thought possible.

Thanks to you and the department, and especially to Randy Baum, Supervisor in Red Lodge and his crew, as well as the supervisors and crews from Billings and Lewistown who also worked so hard.

Sincerely,
Ernie Strum, President
Red Lodge Area Chamber of Commerce

HARDIN REST AREA

To whomever is responsible for these facilities, **CONGRATULATIONS**—they are the best I have encountered anywhere in the world. Good luck from an Australian motorist.

Eric A. Nelson
Caloundra
Queensland, Australia

RETIREMENTS

Recent retirees with over 30 years of service with the Department include: Samuel Hatty, Havre, 35 years, 4 months; Oscar L. Myers, Lewistown, 35 years, 2 months; William E. Fогarty, Butte, 35 years; William E. Swanton, Helena, 34 years, 2 months; Armen H. Weiss, Billings, 32 years, 5 months; Everett D. Larson, Havre, 32 years, 2 months; Donald E. Mittlesadt, Missoula, 30 years, 3 months; Arthur Braut, Helena, 30 years, 1 month; and John E. Seelye, Kalispell, 30 years, 1 month. Other recent retirees are: Richard E. Edwards, Helena, 25 years, 5 months; C. David Garton, Billings, 25 years, 1 month; Virginia E. Schuetze, Helena, 23 years, 7 months; Peter M. Vennes, Jr., Laurel, 19 years, 11 months; Palma J. Gibbs, Helena, 18 years, 2 months; Gordon D. Foley, Helena, 17 years, 8 months; Arnold Soennichsen, Culbertson, 16 years, 2 months; and John G. Murphy, Helena, 13 years, 2 months.

STATEWIDE ROAD REPORT

The Information Unit of the Department of Highways logged 89,535 telephone calls for the statewide road report during the 1983-84 season. The breakdown by month is as follows:

November (15-30th)	—16,281
December	—25,276
January	—18,092
February	—10,515
March	—11,420
April	— 7,951

The fewest number of calls received in one day was 27, on April 14th. The most calls received in one day came just 13 days later on April 27th with 2,036 calls.

1800 copies of this newsletter were produced at a cost of \$.08 each.
Les Benedict, Information Officer, Editor.

Montana State Library



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The Director's office recently received an anonymous letter stating that ideas for better operation of the Montana Department of Highways, or ways to correct wrongful practices, were not being considered by supervisors.

While there will not be a formal "Board" set up to review new suggestions, as requested in the letter, the Department does encourage employees to make suggestions. Ideas on how to make operations work better are not only welcome from all levels within the Department, but necessary.

If an idea is not responded to by your immediate supervisor, an employee should feel free to bring it to the attention of the next level of supervision. Making sure ideas are considered is not an act of disloyalty, but action encouraged by the Department. We all can contribute to doing a better job of maintaining, constructing, and protecting Montana's highway system.

Gary J. Wicks, Director